THE MERSHON CENTER at The Ohio State University

## Daniel Deudney

**Daniel Deudney**
**Johns Hopkins University**

**"Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village"**

**Friday, May 5, 2006**
**12 p.m.**
**Mershon Center**
**Room 120**

*This lecture is open to the public. Lunch will be served to invited students and faculty who RSVP to Viki Jones no later than Tuesday, May 2, 2006.*

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**Daniel Deudney** is an associate professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University. His research interests include general international relations theory, international relations and political theory, and contemporary global issues (nuclear, environment and outer space). His most recent book, *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village*, is forthcoming. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Security Studies* and *International Organization*.

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Globalization and the ascent of liberalism are two major facts of the contemporary world. Yet, according to Daniel Deudney, the current International Relations theories of realism and liberalism do not sufficiently account for these two phenomena. Deudney is associate professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University and author of Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village ,

Deudney argues that the problems realism and liberalism spring from they way they broke off from the main tradition of republicanism in the 19 th century. If we are to recast the western political tradition to make globalization and liberal ascent central rather than peripheral, he says, then we need to go back to original republicanism .

To Deudney, globalization is a five-century process that has brought about rising levels of interdependence on four dimensions: security, economics, ecology and culture. Liberal ascent, on the other hand, refers to the rise of liberal polities over the past two centuries.

Before the 19 th century, republics as polities with limited government and liberal rights were rare, and the consensus was that they would always remain few. Thus, political thinkers were pessimistic about the prospects of human freedom and liberal government. Many would have found it incredible that liberal democracy became the norm among governments across the world toward the end of the 20 th century.

For Western political thinkers in the 18 th century, the dominant concept for security and government was not realism or liberalism, but republicanism. In fact, the terms realism and liberalism as theories of international relations were not coined until the 19 th century, and Deudney argues that they are best thought of as descendants of republicanism.

Realism is characterized by three polar ideas: the anarchy problematique, balance of power, and international society.

Liberalism refers to the ideas of democratic peace, commercial peace, and various kinds of international unions. In breaking off from republicanism, realism and liberalism left out certain components of the original theory. Hence, Deudney argues, they are best viewed as fragmentary and incomplete. The best way to understand globalization and liberal ascent is to combine the six polar ideas of realism and liberalism with key elements of republicanism that have been left out.

**Anarchy-interdependence**

According to Deudney, the two main problematiques of Western structural-materialist security theory are anarchy-interdependence and hierarchy-restraint. In the area of anarchy-interdependence, Deudney theorizes that variations in the material content shape variations in the size of government and in the scope of tolerable anarchy. The two main questions with regard to anarchy are 1) whether government is necessary, and2) whether separate governments can join to form an overarching government.

Both realism and liberalism regard a government of governments as a utopian project. Realists argue that stronger states are unlikely to join such a union. Liberals tend to talk about interdependence, but only in terms of economics and ecology. In other words, violence interdependence tends to be neglected. But according to Deudney, this is the most important material condition that shapes governments.

Violence interdependence refers to the measure of the capacity of actors to harm each other. Technological change is key to this dimension because it changes the composition of violence capability and brings about a shift in the violence interdependence of actors from weak to strong. This is what distinguishes pre-state anarchy from interstate anarchy.

In a situation of intense violence interdependence, the main argument of Western political thought is that states will work together to get out of anarchy. But Deudney argues that violence interdependence is not intractable in the international arena. Violence between states tends to be nasty and brutish, but rarely short. Hence, states do not resolve to overcome anarchy and form a unified government. From this perspective, globalization, as a change in the material context, is essentially a change in the context within which the size of interstate violence matters.

Over the centuries, the scale of government has evolved from city state to European nation state to continental alliances to the entire earth. However, material context as a key component of republican thinking is a combination of geography and technology. It defines which powers and capabilities must be restrained in order to achieve security.

At a global scale, Deudney argues, there was no violence interdependence until the past five centuries. The Roman Empire in Europe and Asia and the Mayan Empire in South American had no relationship because there was no possibility of imposing rule. For anarchy to exist, there must be the possibility of rule. Instead, political leaders were operating on a micro scale; in ancient Greece, for example, the main problem was to get out of anarchy by creating a polis government. In the modern period, Hobbes and other political thinkers made essentially the same political argument but on a greater scale, stressing the need to create nation-states to end the state of nature.

By the 19 th century, Deudney argues, the main concern in Europe was not balance of power, but how to respond to the increase in level of violence interdependence from strong to intense. Hence, political thinkers in early 20 th century argued that people faced a choice between a disastrous war among highly capable states or consolidation and creation of a confederacy. Similarly, in the modern era, nuclear arms have done on a global scale what the gunpowder revolution did for fiefdoms during the feudal era, and what the industrial revolution did for nation-states during the Enlightenment.

**Hierarchy-restraint**

Besides not explaining the problem of anarchy-interdependence, Deudney argues, realism also does not sufficiently grapple with the problem of hierarchy-restraint. Today, the “state” is used as an empty term in political science, but originally it referred to a form of government in opposition to republic. Thus, sovereignty in a hierarchical state is different from sovereignty in a republic.

In a republic, the people, not a single ruler, are sovereign, and they delegate certain authorities to their representatives. The people also delegate minimal authority to their representatives so that the many are not oppressed by the few. However, the development over the past two centuries of the United States and its kindred countries did away with restraints on hierarchy as a security arrangement. Hence, hierarchical structures, once deemed incompatible with republicanism, became the norm among modern republics.

Republics were once thought of as destined to play a marginal role in the interstate arena. This is because political thinkers believed republics could only be small and vulnerable. Such thinking had important consequences, Deudney argues. First, it was believed that republics could survive only on a defensible

peninsula or island.

Second, because of their vulnerability, republics were thought to be fearful of any internal dissent. Republics would depend on maintaining cohesion and military virtue, and so would become communes. As such, it was thought that republics were bound to be militaristic and imperialistic, ultimately becoming anti-liberal and anti-commercial.

For these reasons, Deudney argues, republics faced a basic dilemma: how to combine being large and secure with being free and republican. As the case of Roman Republic demonstrated, success in military expansion and security often leads to the demise of the republic. As a republic comes to dominate its neighbors, internal freedoms are quashed. If the alternative is pursued and the republic stays small, it becomes militaristic.

**America: 'New Order of Ancients'**

It is in terms of this republican security problematique that the debate on the character of the American Republic was cast, Deudney argues. Called a "New Order of Ancients," the United States was founded to combine the viability of empire-size polity with the free and limited government previously associated with small republics. The United States was seen as a union of smaller republics, or states, and it was thought that only by having such a compound republic could a republican polity be viable in the interstate arena.

Freedom from violence is the most important freedom. Republics in pursuit of security are generally thought of as bound to display anti-liberal tendencies. As such, modern liberal systems are very different from ancient republics because they are commercial and capitalistic. They have lost the communal tendencies emphasized by early republics.

To Deudney, however, ancient republics are animated at their core by the same liberal project. The change from ancient republics to illiberal systems has been forced by the shift in their security situations. Seemingly anti-liberal features of republicanism are in fact necessary adaptations that have begun to loosen in the modern period. This allows the political freedoms that characterize modern liberal systems to emerge.